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TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - IRAQ, LILONGWE

1. "Short memories, rude awakenings"

2. The independent daily, "The Daily Times" of March 9, 2005, carried an opinion piece by one of Malawi's prominent writers, Jika Nkolokosa, on his regular "Take it or Leave it" Nkolokosa argues that people in Malawi don't get the truth from politicians. He makes a summation of world events and relates them to Malawi's political scenario. Excerpts follow.

3. It is amazing how short our memories are. I don't mean just Malawians, but we the people of the world. Pardon me if I bring back painful memories to some of you. Soon after 9/11, US President George W. Bush was foaming and frothing about terrorism and, I guess, rightly so. Actually, from time to time, he still does. He promised to take the war to the aggressors, the main one of whom was identified as Osama bin Laden.

.Mr. Bush and company made a silent retreat from the mountains of Afghanistan and took the war to Iraq and Saddam Hussein on grounds that he was an international terrorist as bad as bin Laden.

.The humiliation the former Iraqi dictator went through must surely pass for one of the most blatantly violations of human rights. Never mind that he was a mere shadow of his former self, he was the war's biggest trophy. I wonder if those who lost their loved ones in the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York on that morning of September 11, 2001, thanked Mr. Bush for Saddam's capture. Many people have actually forgotten all about Osama bin Laden. They only remember him when he makes his audacious appearances on al Jazeera. Fewer people still remember there once lived a Slobodan Milosevic.

.When American troops opened fire on a freed Italian hostage and her rescuer, secret agent Nicola Calipari, the Italians dropped their cappuccinos and recalled that these people had been caught in a war they had never supported. Perhaps for an hour or two they will remember that they sacrificed their hero to a cause they did not share.

.When Frederick Chiluba harassed and abused his predecessor Kenneth Kaunda, it never occurred to him that he might one day find himself in Kaunda's shoes.

.Zimbabwe's Jonathan Moyo thought he would be immune to his draconian media laws which muzzled dissent with a rude finality.

.Take it or leave it, those who only tell us about a future of playing diamond studded lutes under a golden staircase fail to tell us the truth. We want the whole truth, the harsh truth. Even a people with short memories need this rude awakening.

Gilmour